6. (Once Amended) Process according to Claim 5, characterized in that the CN compound used in step c) is an aqueous HCN solution or an aqueous solution of an alkali metal cyanide.

7. (Once Amended) Process according to Claim 6, characterized in that the reaction temperature in step c) is from 0°C to 30°C.

8. (Once Amended) Process according to Claim 7, characterized in that in step b) an adduct of the 2-methylpyridine-5-carbaldehyde with the alkali metal hydrogen sulphite is formed which is employed directly without isolation in step c).

9. (Once Amended) Process according to Claim 8, characterized in that the base used in step d) is either an aqueous alkali metal hydroxide solution together with a phase-transfer catalyst or an alkali metal alkoxide in the presence of an organic solvent.

In The Specification

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121, please insert the priority history, as follows, on page 1 between the Title and the first line. The changes made are shown explicitly in the attached "Version With Markings To Show Changes Made".

The following priority history has been inserted on page 1 between the Title and the first line:

This is a 371 National Stage Application of International Patent Application PCT/EP00/00240, filed on January 13, 2000, that has priority benefit of European Patent Application 99100590.1, filed on January 14, 1999, and that has benefit of